

MINUTES FOR JANUARY 15, 2008 MEETING OF THE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members Present: Bill Frick, Chair; Lt. Ron Smith; Jerry Donaldson; Alyce Ortuzar; Charles Kines; John Howley; Steve Friedman; Ben Stutz for Councilmember Ervin; and, James D'Andrea for Sylvia Morrison MCPS. **Members Absent:** William Bronrott, Vice Chair, Alan Migdall, Erwin Mack, Linda Sobel Katz, Peter Moe for Timothy Richards MSHA, Leslie Hamm for Deborah Snead RSC. **County Staff:** Art Holmes, Edgar Gonzalez, and Tom Pogue, Thomas Street and Fred Lees. **Guest:** Richard Hoyer for Councilmember Trachtenberg

Agenda Items:

1. Welcome new members
2. Change in organizational structure of the County's Pedestrian Safety Program
3. Upcoming meeting with County Executive
4. County Executive's New Pedestrian Safety Initiative
5. Status of new State Safe Routes to Schools Grants
6. Other pedestrian safety news and issues
7. Committee comments/follow-up issues/open discussion/identification of future topics

Item 1: Welcome. **Chairman Frick** opened the meeting at 7:15 p.m. **Mr. Pogue** reviewed general information with members, including that bi-monthly meetings will be held in the EOB 10th Floor Conference Room and member's eligibility for County reimbursement of transportation and dependent care expenses. **Mr. Stutz** noted the Tuesday evening schedule will make it difficult for Council members or staff to attend due to the typical scheduling of public hearings on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

Item 2: Change in organizational structure of the County's Pedestrian Safety Program. **Mr. Holmes**, Director of the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT), welcomed everyone and explained that DPWT will continue with the Pedestrian Safety Program guidelines established by the County Executive's Office. He noted, there will be no diminishment of responsibility or dedication to pedestrian safety with the program's placement now within DPWT. He said the County Executive's recent pedestrian safety initiative will be his guideline for implantation. "I work for the County Executive. The initiative is results oriented and I'm results oriented, so I'm going to make decisions and see to it we make progress," he said. He assured the committee that they can always come to him directly if they have questions or concerns about coordination of pedestrian safety operations within the County government. Mr. Holmes reported that DPWT is currently recruiting for a Pedestrian Safety Coordinator and that the coordinator will be located in the Director's office. Mr. Pogue, manager of the program, added that he is also very committed to achieving greater pedestrian safety within the county.

Item 3: Upcoming meeting with the County Executive. **Mr. Pogue** announced that the annual meeting with the County Executive is scheduled for Monday, February 11 [*this meeting has subsequently been rescheduled to March 4*], in the EOB's second floor conference room. He asked members to email him with any concerns, issues, or suggestions they would like addressed with Mr. Leggett. **Mr. Howley** suggested the members attending the meeting ask the County Executive what were his expectations for this committee. **Chairman Frick** suggested we report to the Executive that what the committee had heard most frequently at a series of public meetings it held last year was a concern with the timing of traffic signals—that they were providing insufficient time for pedestrians to cross. **Ms. Ortuzar** brought up some specific locations including the Glenmont area where pedestrian crossing issues existed, and further discussion ensued. Mr. Pogue suggested any members meeting with the County Executive focus on general pedestrian safety issues, avoiding too many specific locations—these would be better brought to the attention of DPWT staff.

Item 4: County Executive's New Pedestrian Safety Initiative. **Mr. Street**, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer in the County Executive's Office, presented a PowerPoint overview on the County's Pedestrian Safety Initiative (a copy of the initiative is available online at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov>). Approximately four months ago, the County Executive's office established a collaborative inter-agency group to develop additional solutions to pedestrian safety issues. Members of the group represented the Departments of Public Works, Police, Permitting Services; Park and Planning; Montgomery County Public Schools and the County Council. The group recommended a set of seven strategies to the County Executive that would achieve two broad goals:

1. Reduce pedestrian-related crashes, injuries, fatalities, and their associated social and economic costs; and
2. Ensure that all areas of the County provide safe and convenient travel options for pedestrians.

Mr. Street went on to explain in greater detail the components of the County Executive's pedestrian safety initiative's seven strategies. He noted that this committee would serve as one of prime advocates for pedestrians in the county. **Mr. Stutz** commented that having the initiative fully funded would be a good topic to mention to the County Executive.

Item 5: Status of new State Safe Routes to Schools Grants. **Mr. Pogue** briefed members on several grants that DPWT is in the process of obtaining from the Maryland Highway Safety Office. He explained that one grant involves outreach to schools to work with the students, parents, and teachers as well as the whole community to encourage children in grades K through 8 to walk to school. This grant is more related to people power. A second grant involves construction engineering, which is contracted out. A third grant will be for continued funding of the coordinator position plus potentially more engineering work near additional school sites. Mr. Pogue will be coordinating these grants until the Pedestrian Safety Coordinator is hired.

Item 6: Other Pedestrian Safety News and Issues. **Mr. Pogue** shared with members some ideas on possible promotional materials on pedestrian safety, including a program to systematically distribute retro-reflective zipper pulls. **Mr. Donaldson** said he had several contacts in the private sector whose companies manufactured reflective items that possibly could be donated to the initiative. He will work with **Andrea Turner** in the Division of Operations, DPWT, for what items can be handed out to promote the program. Mr. Pogue noted that contracted part-time assistance (probably via a temp agency) has been built into the County Executive's initiative to distribute promotional materials through the County libraries, Government Services Centers, etc. DPWT will be waiting to see if this and other items receive funding within the FY09 operating budget. **Mr. Kines** suggested also distributing material via local fairs including the Arbor Day celebration event. **Mr. D'Andrea** reported he is working with DPWT's contractor to set up additional sessions for the walk to school training program.

Item 7: Committee comments/follow-up issues/open discussion/identification of future topics. Mr. Pogue asked members to let him know of any future topics they would like to address. **Mr. Hoyer** informed the attendees of an upcoming Annual Transportation Research Conference in downtown Washington. **Mr. Donaldson** reported the Traffic Control Manual is being expanded to contain additional wording for pedestrian safety. The revised edition is expected this coming July. **Mr. Kines** suggested an update to the committee on the new Road Code revisions could be scheduled over the next few months. **Mr. Hoyer** mentioned Councilwoman's Trachtenberg's amendment to the new traffic code involving pedestrians.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will take place on March 18, 700p.m., at the EOB's 10th floor conference room.